



National
Weather Service



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Diversity Matters

Spring 2016

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Welcome Message

Welcome to the Spring issue of Diversity Matters. Spring is all about new beginnings and getting a fresh start. Take advantage of this time to look for where you may want to approach something with a fresh start. Take a new look at diversity and inclusion and use the fresh new beginning of Spring to recommit yourself to equality. Just like the fresh Spring flowers, we are all colorful and beautiful in our own unique ways. Enjoy the newsletter, embrace diversity, enjoy the Spring and may you find happiness in your life.

(re)Defining Diversity By: Dave Rowell

In a recent Diversity Matters article I took a stab at defining Inclusion – an often used but oft undefined term. I can only hope I made sense and added some clarification. But at the same time it should not be assumed that ‘diversity’ itself has been well, or even appropriately, defined. Most of us recognize it is not simply a numbers thing. If diversity is not numbers of identifiable components what is it? When I teach diversity in the classroom or at workshops I use the analogy of a jar of jelly beans. Certainly we can see the color and quantity of the jelly beans – but what else. Most of us understand that the real makeup of any of the beans does not necessarily correspond to the color of its shell. Not to mitigate the color as it is elemental part of the bean, but what is often more important is what’s inside – the flavor. Its taste may speak higher as to what that jelly bean is really about. But even that is not the complete picture. These days there are endless varieties of jelly beans, each with its own merit. Some of these beans we easily recognize – some not. The breadth of diversity does include the well-known facets of race, or gender, or age, but also the less obvious such as personal traits and skills, experiences, social upbringing, political or religious identification, family history, etc... Then too another thing to consider is that as much as diversity is about difference, so too is it about similarity. Jelly beans have a lot in common. You know a jelly bean when you see one. Likewise humans have more in common with each other than differences – *any* two individuals have more in common than things different. But even in acknowledging that we are not seeing the whole diversity picture. I can’t speak for you but it’s very seldom I pick up a single jelly bean from the candy dish – I grab a handful, and every handful I grab is unique. Another less thought about but perhaps most impactful aspect of diversity is the dynamics that take place among groups of individuals. The taste changes with each mix of beans. This is diversity at work – the full depth of the individual, the breadth of difference (and/or similarities) among individuals, and the dynamics of the mix at any given point in time. As a matter of leveraging diversity, or ‘doing’ diversity management, we need to understand the whole of the individuals and how they interact and interface as components of teams in the workplace. With this more complete understanding we can better foster relationships and performance.

We are all jelly beans of rich diverse colors and flavors, but jelly beans one and all none the less. Let’s appreciate and enjoy that fact and each other.

Dreaming of a Weather-Ready Nation

By: Richard “Pete” Hill

Two score and twelve years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his iconic, “I Have a Dream” speech. Fifty-two years later, most Americans are familiar with the content and character of the speech but are not as familiar with the character of the man. Who was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr? He was a Southern Baptist preacher, Civil Rights leader, and a student of science.

This last fact may come as a shock because admittedly his focal point was a quest for social justice, not his love of science. Yet, Dr. King said, “Science investigates; religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge, which is power; religion gives man wisdom, which is control. Science deals mainly with facts; religion deals mainly with values. The two are not rivals.” In Dr. King’s time the moral imperative was ending racial segregation. Today, the argument could be made that the new moral imperative is building a Weather-Ready Nation.

Dr. King, in August 1963, asked us to envision a nation where, “little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.” Today, scientists are visualizing a nation where little boys and little girls of every ethnicity are unable to breathe fresh air and drink clean water because we are failing to protect and preserve our natural resources for the little boys and girls of the future. If we continue to waste our resources we will soon understand what Dr. King meant when he said, “We will learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”

Dr. King’s civil rights work focused on protecting the powerless from unjust social policies of the nation. Conversely, the National Weather Service is charged with protecting people and property from weather related destruction by providing timely weather warnings. As we build our Weather-Ready Nation, we will encounter challenges and in those challenging moments, we should remember what Dr. King said about challenges and controversy. King said, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Dr. King was born in 1929, a very challenging year. In fact, he was born the same year the Great Depression started. Two years before his birth, the “Great Flood” of 1927 put some places in Louisiana under 100 feet of water. It was during this flood that another famous Doctor, Dr. Isaac Cline of the Weather Bureau, earned the support and admiration of the people of New Orleans after providing them with advanced warning about the rising Mississippi River.

Dr. King and Dr. Cline were both focused on the welfare of society. Dr. Cline was a meteorologist who spent his long life preparing his community for severe weather and Dr. King spent his short life persuading the nation to accept the principal of “all men are created equal.” As we modernize the Weather Service and strengthen our community outreach we should never forget the sacrifices of Dr. King or Dr. Cline.

Sadly, an assassin’s bullet cut short the promising life of Dr. King but not before he radically altered the diversity landscape of America. And while it may be true that barriers to equality continue to exist, Dr. King was right when he said, “We shall overcome someday.”

NWS Launches Gender Mainstreaming Working Group

By: Dave Rowell

In 2014, Laura Furgione, Hope Hasberry, Michelle Hawkins, Caroline Covington, and Vankita Brown, traveled to Geneva, Switzerland for the Gender Dimensions in Weather and Climate Conference, hosted by the World Meteorological Organization.

Participants convened to raise awareness and showcase good practices on how to equally empower women and men to build safer, stronger and more resilient societies through the provision and use of gender-sensitive weather and climate services.

To address discrepancies in women's participation in atmospheric and climates science, as well as, give special attention to the unique impacts of women's issues with regard to weather, climate, and health, members of the delegation along with the chair of the NWS Diversity Council and The NWS Diversity Ambassador for Gender, Dave Rowell, formed the Gender Mainstreaming Working Group.

Gender mainstreaming is formalization of assessing the different implications for women and men of any planned policy action, program design, and education. Gender mainstreaming systematize gender sensitive principles into actions that the organization can undertake to achieve effectiveness and appropriateness. These actions are directed both internally and externally.

Gender is a central variable as it can affect behaviors and responses to hazards and climate impacts. Across the globe, natural disasters such as droughts, floods and storms kill more women than men, and tend to kill women at a younger age, according to the World Health Organization.

The reasons for this are certainly complex, but research suggests that women have been shown to be more risk averse than men, and men are more risk-seeking. Women perceive disaster situations or threats more seriously than men do, thereby heightening their perceptions of risk, especially if a family member is in jeopardy.

The GMWG has outlined several activities including:

- A two-day forum in Summer or Fall of 2016
- Developing a plan to identify priorities for integrating gender sensitivities in NWS products, services, and outreach efforts
- Working with social scientists to develop and incorporate gender focused training into NWS training curriculum
- Developing outreach to increase gender awareness within and externally to NWS

More information will be forthcoming about the plans of the group and instillation of gender mainstreaming principles in NWS practices. To begin with look for a webinar on the topic in March 2016.



T.E.A.M. Leadership Workshop, Together Everyone Achieves More!

By: Julie Packett



T.E.A.M. workshop participants from NWS Charleston, Columbia, Jacksonville, & Wilmington

The most effective field leaders reinforce the importance of teamwork. In a National Weather Service (NWS) Forecast Office setting, teamwork plays a critical role in achieving the NWS mission of protecting life and property. In fact, collaboration needs to extend past the brick walls of a NWS building.

In an effort to bring forth the importance of teamwork and unity within our office and across forecast area borders, NWS Charleston hosted a sub-regional leadership workshop in early November. With three additional NWS Offices in attendance, Wilmington, NC; Columbia, SC; and Jacksonville, FL, the passion and enthusiasm for achieving organizational goals was contagious. Over the course of the day, eight different speakers presented and/or led activities on a wide range of topics, including crisis management, personal accountability, problem solving, and team building. The comradery allowed for open discussion on various issues and successes within each office. As an extra bonus, Toby Housey, a former NWS Charleston employee and current member of the 628th Air Base Wing Equal Opportunity Office, graciously agreed to participate in the workshop. Partnered with TSgt Smith, Mr. Housey led a team-building activity that focused on time management, problem solving and trust between team members. As a result, this workshop strengthened relationships and helped develop personal leadership skills. Those in attendance commented that the workshop was a “success” and included “a nice diverse group of talks and good discussion points.”



NWS Wilmington's Warning Coordination Meteorologist Steve



Meteorologists Bob Bright & Carl Barnes participating in a team-building exercise

Closets

By: Dave Rowell

Most of us have heard the terms ‘closeted’ or ‘out of the closet’. In looking at a definition of “closet” in this article we thus are concerned with the second one shown. The ‘closet’ has come to be widely known as how a person may hide his or her sexual orientation, especially if that orientation is homosexual. But what will be argued here is that there are many closets people ‘hide’ in for a good many reasons other than their sexual orientation.

¹clos-et  *noun* \ˈklä-zət, ˈklō-\

: a usually small room that is used for storing things (such as clothing, towels, or dishes)

: a state in which someone will not talk about something or admit something; *especially* : a state in which someone will not admit being a homosexual

Most people don’t understand the concept of being in a closet because they have never been there. Imagine if you were uncomfortable making a part of yourself so central to your being unknown. For example, what if you felt you needed to hide your religious beliefs and never say a word about it, not that you ever went to church or celebrated a religious holiday, or wore a religious emblem around your neck – or felt some level of trepidation, if not outright fear, at having a picture of your loved one on your desk. Never openly celebrated any of life’s momentous occasions, such as an anniversary. Being in the closet means self-censoring of thoughts, words, and actions; closets are wasted knowledge, creativity, and energy.

Yet there are many among us who could say ... I work alongside you and this is **my closet**:

I am a gay man, but I keep this fact and my personal photos hidden; also elements of my self such as my creativity

I am a female. But being this is a man’s organization, I put aside many facets of me and take on (fake) new behaviors to fit it.

I am a non-Christian who works with many devoted Christians. I hide my religious jewelry, important religious activities, and my values. I stand aside.

I have a mental disability – dyslexia. I will never show it, but I struggle greatly at times with simple tasking that would otherwise be taken for granted.

I came from a poor background, and thus attended an little known school. I keep this secret so that my education and knowledge is not questioned

Continued on
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Closets Continued



In flying ‘under the radar’ – team members can’t contribute all that they have to bring to the table.

- Being fettered by fear of discovery is common and effects a wide range of behaviors from enthusiasm to creativity
- Work is a social activity – which requires social expression, suppression inhibits work relationships
- Being bottled up and without support mechanisms - stress is often the norm

And there are many personal and performance effects of being closeted:

- Assumptions of weaker qualifications lead to unequal and erroneous tasking, and discrimination
- Non-inclusion is an impediment due to limited access to resources, including information
- Being misunderstood leads to withdrawal, hindering both work relationships and performance
- The stereotypes and assumptions lock people into rigid gender roles
- Stress about image, expectations and possible ramification is often the norm
- The prejudice compromises others by pressuring them to treat people badly; That in turn fosters distrust overall

Yet despite these drawbacks many people remain so hidden because of the fact that ‘outing’ one’s self can be seen as declaring open-season on one’s self.

When you close the door on one person you close the door on everyone. Authenticity should be encouraged, brought forth, so that each of us can bring all that we are to the table; all our talents, ideas, energies, personal qualities that make us unique and valuable ... out in contribution, rather than being hidden away.

Have a Great Diversity Tip or Idea?

By: Delyne Kirkham

We love receiving information from you. It's not just about keeping up with diversity news from other offices; it's about participating in it! You help shape the National Weather Service's diversity program by sharing what matters to and works for you and your office. Your contributions can help create a better agency. Simply put... Diversity Matters! Our work is all about you. Send any diversity tips or ideas to hope.hasberry@noaa.gov.



SES Diversity and Inclusion Commitments

By: Dave Rowell

At the SES Summit this past fall, NOAA Senior Leaders made the following Diversity and Inclusion Commitments:

1. Whatever I have been doing on diversity and inclusion, I will double-down and do more.
2. I will tell the story of this SES retreat to my team unit.
3. I will create a safe place for this topic in my unit – safe to explore feelings and behaviors.
4. I will intentionally model inclusive behaviors every day.
5. I will do at least 2 things in the next year to strengthen my skills – by reading or training.

The question is thus put to you managers in Silver Spring, National Centers, Regional and Field offices ... How many of these commitments can you match?

Meet the NWS Diversity Newsletter Editor: Aaron Sorensen

By: Aaron Sorensen



Aaron graduated from the University of Utah with a Bachelors in Business Administration. He signed up for the Army National Guard and left for basic training right after High School graduation. He was deployed to Afghanistan and then, a year after returning home, was deployed to Iraq. Aaron was honorably discharged after completing his commitment.

Aaron enjoys the arts, from singing, theater and dance. He enjoys making rhinestone jewelry for entertainers and can often be found wearing his latest creations as his drag persona, Champagne (pictured left). Champagne has been performing for ten years as part of the Royal Court, a charitable organization that raises funds to support local people and various other charities.



The Jackson Weather Office AG1 Edward T. Earhart Memorial Scholarship

By: David Stamper



The National Weather Service (NWS) in Jackson, KY has always expressed a desire to help students with their educational endeavors. As an expression of those desires, a scholarship was established for students to attend the Lees College Campus of Hazard Community College. Beginning in 1997, "The Jackson Weather Office Employee Scholarship" awarded disbursements of \$125 per semester, for a total of \$250 per academic year. From 1997 through 2003, seven eastern Kentucky students benefited from the scholarship. The scholarship remains but something happened that would forever change it.

On September 11, 2001, the Pentagon was destroyed by an unforgivable act of terrorism, and many Americans perished in the catastrophe. One of those Americans was Rowan County native Edward T. Earhart. Aerographers Mate 1st Class, Ed Earhart was assigned to the Pentagon METOC Component of the Naval Ice Center. AG1 Earhart graduated from Rowan County High School and attended Morehead State University prior to Enlisting in the Navy. AG1 Earhart loved to teach school children about the weather and had desires to finish his college degree in the Washington D.C. area. AG1 Ed Earhart was a leader with an unflinching willingness to get the job done right.

Many fine, brave folks died on this horrible day and the tragedy changed all of our lives. When we became aware that a Navy weatherman from eastern Kentucky perished at the Pentagon, it hit us very hard. Not many people work in the weather business and if you are in it very long, you get to know most of them.

There is also a special bond between soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. This also adds to our grief because many on our staff began their careers in the Military. We did not know Ed Earhart personally; however we became friends with his family. At our request, and with the family's permission, the scholarship was renamed in the fall of 2003 to, "The Jackson Weather Office AG1 Edward T. Earhart Memorial Scholarship."

On October 19, 2004, the family of Ed Earhart donated \$5,000 dollars to the scholarship fund. I really don't know how to express our gratitude to the Earhart Family for this gesture. The Earhart Family donation, combined with continuous donations from the local weather staff, enabled the scholarship to become endowed. On November 5, 2007, an Endowment Agreement was signed by members of the Earhart Family, NWS staff, and, Hazard Community and Technical College System.

In 1997, the Scholarship awarded \$125 per semester, for a total of \$250 per academic year. Over the past 18 years the NWS staff has remained dedicated to meeting the needs of Eastern Kentucky students. Currently, the Earhart Scholarship Endowment provides \$800.00 per semester for a total of \$1600 dollars per academic year. This Fall 2015 semester, the NWS staff has pledged to sponsor an additional student at \$800 dollars per semester rate. Many former staff members continue to donate to the Earhart Scholarship after their departure from this office. NWS Jackson is very proud of the Earhart Scholarship and its growth over the years.

Hopefully the Earhart Scholarship will allow us to reflect on those men and women, both military and civilian, who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. It will also help to honor an extraordinary young man from Salt Lick, Kentucky. Ed Earhart served his community and nation with distinction; may he be a reminder to all that we have the opportunity to serve.

On June 18, 2015, a luncheon was held at the National Weather Service office in Jackson, KY. Gathered were members of the Ed Earhart family, Hazard Community and Technical College System staff, and National Weather Service staff. During the luncheon, the current and future status of the "Jackson Weather Office AG1 Edward T. Earhart Memorial Scholarship" was discussed. The Earhart Family were enroute to a family reunion in Georgia and stopped by the NWS office for a visit. It was very nice to sit down with Ed's family. Following is a brief history of the "The Jackson Weather Office AG1 Edward T. Earhart Memorial Scholarship."



Back row, L to R, Carla Seale (HCTCS), Claudette Thomas (aunt), Andi (sister), Jennifer Vogt-Miller (NWS), Krystal Vogt-Miller (NWS Spouse), Les and Toni Thomas (uncle-aunt), Ellie (cousin) Frank Terrizzi (retired NWS). Dave Stamper (NWS), Bonnie Terrizzi (retired NWS) Blake (nephew).

NWS Diversity Ambassadors: A Resource for NWS Employees

By: Dave Rowell

Working with the NWS Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management Office, and the NWS Diversity Council, the NWS Diversity Ambassadors function as a national support mechanism for Diversity Focal Points as well as all NWS employees. Your NWS Diversity Ambassadors are:

- Jose Garcia - WFO Amarillo, jose.garcia@noaa.gov, 806-335-2911 x222
(Leadership, Team/workplace Diversity, Cultural issues)
- Todd Hall - WFO Los Angeles, todd.hall@noaa.gov, 805-988-6615 x284
(Generation/age issues, family, work-life, dress/appearance, recruitment)
- Hope Hasberry - NWS Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management, hope.hasberry@noaa.gov, 301-713-0692 x216
(All Diversity Management and EEO related issues)
- Delyne Kirkham - WFO Elko, delyne.kirkham@noaa.gov, 775-778-6718
(Disabilities, Work-life, Team Diversity)
- Cheryl Latif - ERH, cheryl.latif@noaa.gov, 631-244-0162
(EEO, Disabilities, Diversity Toolbox Point-of-Contact)
- Teresa Murphy - Teresa.Murphy@noaa.gov
(Generational issues)
- Shari Mutchler - AWC, shari.mutchler@noaa.gov, 816-584-7200 X269
(Marriage/marital status; Women's/family issues)
- David Rowell - NWSTC, dave.rowell@noaa.gov, 816-994-3010
(Team Diversity; Gender issues; LGBTQ)
- James C. Su, Ph.D. - NWS HQ, james.su@noaa.gov, 301-713-0023 x139
(Culture Diversity, Employee Retention, and Mentoring issues)
- Jason Wright - WFO Nashville, TN Jason.B.Wright@noaa.gov, 615-754-8500 Ext. 555
(Mental Health Awareness, Work-Life)
- For additional information: http://www.weather.gov/eo-diversity/div_ambassadors



National Weather Service



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Want to submit an article?

Great!

Articles are due for the Summer Edition
by May 5th, 2016.

Please email to:

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Diversity Facebook Page Launch

In recognition of a growing need to provide a safe place for our workforce to provide diversity related feedback to Agency leadership-- the N.W.S. Diversity Council in collaboration with EODMD is launching a Facebook page exclusively dedicated to this end. The Diversity Council will host this new place to share diversity related information but more importantly to allow employees who wish to voluntarily participate to also openly share ideas, thoughts, concerns, information and feedback. The page will be available for voluntary membership by all N.W.S. employees as well as other NOAA line office employees. The Facebook page will reach our employees from Guam to Caribou Maine and all of the WFOs and RFCs in between. It is a grass roots effort; Operated by employees for employees; A table of sorts where employees can gather around together to safely and openly discuss items of interest and make known concerns.

This Facebook page is still very early in the planning stage. NWS Deputy Director, Laura Furgione is encouraging everyone to participate in the launch by submitting a name for the new page. Please share your page name suggestion(s) and any input you have with Diversity Council leadership by contacting us at: dave.rowell@noaa.gov and delyne.kirkham@noaa.gov. This is your opportunity to join Agency leadership in an effort to celebrate our diversity and make our agency a more inclusive work space. Please stay tuned for more contest and rollout details in the near future.

Other Diversity Newsletters: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/oeodm/diversity/toolkit/diversity_material_field/commnewsletter.php

Call for Weather and Diversity Photos By Delyne Kirkham

We are looking for interesting weather and diversity pictures from around the National Weather Service (NWS) to enhance the NWS "Diversity Matters" newsletter. We may be including these pictures in the one of the NWS Diversity Matters newsletters, published quarterly, or potentially on any NOAA/NWS website. We will give credit for each photo. By submitting photos, you automatically grant to NOAA NWS the right to publish and use the photos. You further warrant that you own the rights to the photo. You agree that your submission does not, and will not, violate any applicable U.S. or state laws or regulations, or cause a breach of any agreement with any third parties; and that none of the submissions will infringe any copyright, invade any right of privacy, right of publicity, or infringe or violate any rights of any other person or entity. Please share your weather and diversity photos with us, send photos to the editor: aaron.sorensen@noaa.gov

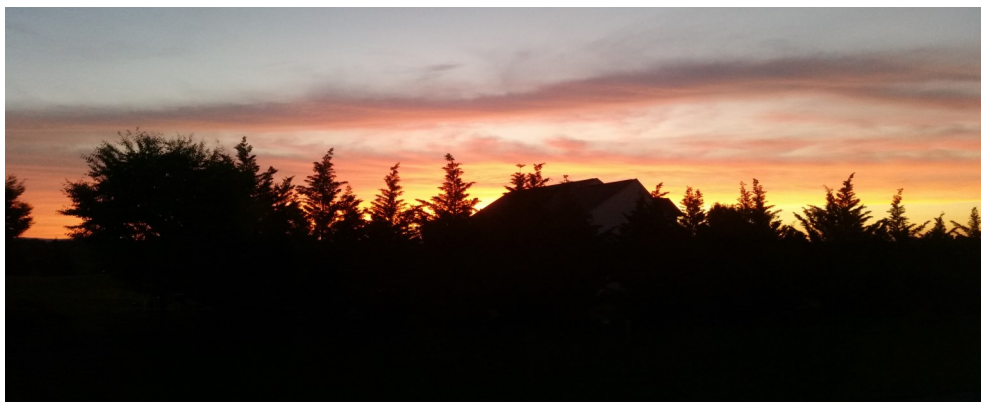


Photo taken in Hagerstown, MD courtesy of Maria Krug.